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ABSTRACT

Opinions of the general public and of special interest groups on the subject of day care are examined. The opinions are discussed as to concept of day care, family versus center care, location, grouping, program cost, and staff. The special interest groups studied were child development professionals, minority groups, industry, and women's liberation groups. The impact of day care programs on public opinion is presented as to sources of information, results, and problems for future study. Results of the research include the following: (1) both the general public and special interest groups approve of the concept of child care; (2) almost half of the mothers in the U.S. use some form of supplementary child care, but to a large degree, this is privately arranged care on an individual basis; (3) day care centers are widely approved of by working women, especially poor ones; reaction to center care for all children is generally less favorable; (4) the specific issues which generate opinions are family vs. center care, cost, location, and transportation; and (5) groups that emphasize educational and child development aspects of day care feel that day care in centers is a right to which all children are entitled; in general, these groups support federally funded centers. A 50-item bibliography is included. (For related documents, see PS 005 969-975, 977-983.) (AL)

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FINAL REPORT: PART VI

PUBLIC OPINION TOWARD DAY CARE

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Approved for
INSTITUTE FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

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FOREWORD

This final report is submitted to the Office of Economic Opportunity by the Day Care Policy Studies Group in fulfillment of Contract B00-5121. This report presents the research undertaken by the Day Care Policy Studies Group and does not necessarily represent the policies or positions of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

The final report is presented in two sections; Part I Alternative Federal Day Care Strategies for the 1970's: Summary Report, and Parts II through X, supporting appendices to the summary report. The following separately bound volumes are included:

Parts:
- I — Alternative Federal Day Care Strategies of the 1970's: Summary Report
- II — Volume 1 — Child Care Programs: Estimation of Impacts and Evaluation of Alternative Federal Strategies
  - Volume 2 — Appendixes to Child Care Programs: Estimation of Impacts and Evaluation of Alternative Federal Strategies
  - Volume 3 — Measurements of Impacts of Child Care Programs
- III — Existing Day Care Legislation
- IV — Volume 1 — Costs of Day Care
  - Volume 2 — Appendix to Costs of Day Care: Proceedings of a Workshop
- V — Challenges in Day Care Expansion
- VI — Public Opinion Toward Day Care
- VII — Types of Day Care and Parents' Preferences

VIII Future Trends Affecting Day Care and Preschool Education

IX Volume 1 Training Programs for Child Care Personnel

Volume 2 Appendix to Training Programs for Child Care Personnel

X Volume 1 Day Care: An Annotated Bibliography

Volume 2 Bibliography Supplement for September, October, and November 1971

Volume 3 Bibliography Supplement for December 1971

In addition to this final report and supporting technical appendixes, the Day Care Policy Studies Group has provided the following supporting documents to the Office of Economic Opportunity in fulfillment of this contract.

An Explication of Some Alternative Federal Day Care Strategies for the 70's

Potential Impacts from Child Care

Considerations in the Evaluation of Alternative Funding Mechanisms for Day Care Services

The Effect of Present and Proposed Tax Deductions for Child Care

Emerging Findings and Implications for the Implementation of the Day Care Provisions of H.R.1 and OEO R & D in Day Care

Pending Federal Legislation Pertaining to Day Care

Review of Pending Day Care Legislation

Benefit/Cost Analysis of Day Care Programs Under a Family Assistance Plan

The Public's Opinion of Day Care

Paraprofessionals in Day Care

Some Implications of the Provision of Day Care Services

Day Care: An Annotated Bibliography Monthly Supplements

Questions Relating to the Federal Role in Day Care (Unpublished)

Evidence of Interest by States and Local Governments in Implementing Day Care and Preschool Educational Programs (Unpublished)

SUMMARY

Reports of public opinion surveys and a survey of existing literature have suggested only a few fairly clear trends in public opinion on day care.

The research indicates that both the general public and concerned special interest groups approve of the concept of child care by someone other than the child's parents during extended periods of the day.

Almost half the mothers in the U.S.A. apparently use some form of supplementary child care. But to an overwhelming degree this is privately arranged care on an individual basis, generally with friends or relatives.

Day care centers seem to elicit widespread approval when those served are working women, especially poor ones. Reaction to center care for all children is generally less favorable.

The specific issues which generate opinions -- and varied opinions, at that -- are family versus center care, cost, location, and transportation.

Those who support center care rather than family care base their opinions on the fact that a center can provide more for the child in terms of qualified staff, extensive equipment, and a variety of adults and peers with whom to interact. Supporters of family care seem to feel it is a warmer, less impersonal kind of care, and is not limited to "disadvantaged" families.

Location and transportation involve problems of convenience, while cost is, of course, also a major concern for most families.

Groups emphasizing educational and child development aspects of day care hold the opinion that day care, provided through centers, is a right to which all children are entitled. In general, these groups support federally funded centers of this type. However, many legislators and officials responsible for public assistance programs believe that day care should be provided only to assist people to gain employment, and thereby achieve economic independence and reduce public assistance.

The increase in the numbers of articles on day care as indexed in the *Readers Guide to Periodical Literature* indicates that day care is increasing as a public issue, and as a result will have an impact on public opinion.

May people undoubtedly have no clear-cut predisposition for or against different types of day care. Their opinions will be determined by their own predispositions and experience, and possible other people's experience with day care as it expands.

PUBLIC OPINION TOWARD DAY CARE

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INTRODUCTION

At the present time, pinning down clear, concise facts about public opinion toward day care is an elusive task. Most people have had little contact with organized, licensed child care, and only recently has day care become a pervasive public issue. With pending government legislation, the women's liberation movement, and other grass-roots activities, opinion may soon crystallize into considerably more than favorable or unfavorable dispositions. While it is important that federal decision makers and planners are familiar with general intensity and direction of opinion about day care, more detailed information is needed to properly conceptualize the role of the federal government in nationwide day care programs. An accurate gauge of public opinion would help the federal government develop a day care policy which would elicit the greatest amount of support and utilization.

In gauging public opinion, it is necessary to examine not only the general public, but also groups which have special relationships to day care. These include persons who will be providing care, such as private entrepreneurs and specialists in early childhood education, and those likely to receive federally supported day care services, mostly minority and low-income groups.

As information on day care generally, and federally aided day care in particular, becomes more concrete and well known to the public, further clarification and enunciation of opinion will likely occur. It is prudent, therefore, for the federal government to consider legislation in the light of this emerging public opinion.

This report is a documentation and analysis of opinions which

have been gathered from a variety of sources. It combines material from a previous paper by Jacqueline Anderson and Howard Schneider, "The Public's Opinion of Day Care Programs," issued by the Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies in October 1970, and information collected since that time.

BEHAVIORAL MANIFESTATIONS OF OPINION

Behavior is often a more telling indicator of belief than expressed opinions. Thus, to assess the direction and intensity of public opinion about day care, we decided to focus on behavioral manifestations of such opinion. To do so, a number of means have been employed.

An attempt was made to enumerate all the articles which appeared in the mass media over the past few years, and to determine the response to these articles from the public, essentially in the form of letters to the editor. The number of licensed day care centers and family day care homes since 1967 was also researched, as well as the amount spent by local public welfare agencies for day care over the past 5 years. A survey of day care services provided by hospitals was also examined. Waiting lists were thought to be a good indicator of demand, but such information on any kind of comprehensive level has been very difficult to compile.

According to the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, the number of articles dealing with day care in 1970 was more than twice the number during any previous year studied.

Year		No. of Articles
1970	-	15
1969	-	4
1968	-	2
1967	-	5
1966	-	6
1965	-	2

This would seem to indicate an increase in interest on the part of the mass media to follow the burgeoning developments in day care -- much more is happening, much more will happen, and the media wants to cover this news. The information concerning public response to these articles has not yet been received.

In 1950, mothers constituted about 25% of the total work force. By 1968, this proportion had risen to approximately 40%. The proportion is now approaching, or has reached, 50%. Four-and-one-half million children under six have mothers who are working.[1] The assumption is, or course, that these children are receiving some form of day care. While the figures may not be precise, their magnitude does indicate that day care is not unknown to most Americans, and that it is used in some form by almost half the mothers in America.

Mothers are more likely to work, and thus to use day care services, if they are husbandless, if their children are school age, if they are nonwhite, or if their husband's income is less than $10,000.[2] For these subgroups of Americans, the concept of day care is an even more well known and accepted phenomenon than for other groups.

The primary form of day care experienced by the general public is overwhelmingly informally and individually arranged family day care. Nearly half of the children under six whose mothers work are cared for in their own homes, most likely by relatives or neighbors; only 6% are cared for in center facilities such as a day care center or nursery school.[3]

The same relative proportions hold for children in AFDC families. In 1969, 37% of these children were cared for in their own homes while their mothers worked or were in training. Approximately another 27% were cared for in someone else's homes. Only 5% of the children under three and 11% of the children three to five years were cared for in group care centers.[4] (These figures may be somewhat imprecise since the care arrangements were unknown for about 25% of the children.)

The National Center for Social Statistics summarized the AFDC situation as follows:

> *A sizeable majority of all mothers who worked or were enrolled in a work or training program had their children cared for in a private home, most often their own. Baby sitters for children from infants to age 14, cared for at home, were usually relatives. Group care was apparently not desired or not available for most of these mothers; this type of facility was used by only five percent with children under age three, 11 percent with children aged three to five, and three percent with children aged six to 14. About 15 percent of the mothers with children aged six to 14 let them look after themselves while the mother was working or being trained.*[5]

The National Center for Social Statistics in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare publishes a yearly document, *Child Welfare Statistics*, which includes statistics of the number of day care facilities and their capacity. The figures indicate a 12.6% increase in the number of facilities from 1967 to 1968 and a 20% increase from 1968 to 1969.[6] The following two tables indicate the constant increases for both family and center care for the years 1967 to 1969:

TABLE 1. LICENSED OR APPROVED DAY CARE CENTERS

	Total		Public		Voluntary		Independent	
	Number	Capacity	Number	Capacity	Number	Capacity	Number	Capacity
1967	10,400	393,300	400	22,600	2,600	113,900	6,900	239,300
1968	11,700	438,000	580	27,700	3,100	139,000	6,800	231,000
1969	13,600	518,000	730	34,700	4,100	178,000	7,600	266,000

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TABLE 2. LICENSED OR APPROVED FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES

	Total		Public		Voluntary		Independent	
	Number	Capacity	Number	Capacity	Number	Capacity	Number	Capacity
1967	24,300	81,900	800	2,500	400	1,300	18,400	63,900
1968	27,400	97,200	1,300	3,600	570	2,200	23,900	84,600
1969	32,700	120,000	2,500	8,000	550	2,100	27,600	102,000

Child Welfare Statistics also reports on the amount spent by state and local welfare agencies for provision of day care. Again, striking increases from year to year indicate the demand and the interest shown by both recipients and agencies. The figures are as follows:

TABLE 3. EXPENDITURES OF STATE AND LOCAL PUBLIC WELFARE AGENCIES FOR 'PROVISION OF DAY CARE'

	Amount	Percentage of Total Budget
1965	$ 9,200,000	2.6
1966	12,100,000	3.0
1967	14,300,000	3.2
1968	14,670,000	2.9
1969	20,760,000	3.7

A report issued by the Women's Bureau, Department of Labor, provides information on hospitals which provide day care center services for their employees.[7] Of the more than 2,000 hospitals surveyed, 98 were operating centers as of April 1968, while more than 500 expressed interest. Twenty-two indicated they had plans to start centers of their own. The majority of the centers have been in operation for less than 5 years; 16 less than 1 year; and 9 for more than 15 years. As almost 17% of the centers were opened within the past year, and almost 75% just within the last 5 years, this is further illustration of the growing concern

and action taken about day care. Only 4 centers were located more than 8 blocks from the hospital and 79 were on the hospital grounds. About half were in the South. The centers were operating at close to capacity, and there were waiting lists at 35 centers for certain age groups.

The implication of this study for the federal government might be special consideration for industries and other places of work such as hospitals, which employ a high percentage of women, by examining the ways in which the day care needs of the working women and their children in these circumstances could be met.

A study of day care facilities in Evanston, Illinois, found that day care centers were operating at 94% of capacity, whereas nursery schools were operating at 98% capacity.[8] One director of a day care center ceased to maintain a waiting list after the list grew to include 150 names. It was thought that this might be a reason why more waiting lists are not maintained -- they are just too burdensome and essentially nonproductive. An article appearing in the *Minneapolis Tribune* on November 8, 1970, claimed that waiting lists dramatize "the need and interests of mothers everywhere."[9] As examples, the article mentioned Los Angeles, which serves 6,000 children in its centers, but has a waiting list of 12,000; and New York City which serves 8,500 children with just as many waiting to get in.

Another indication of the lack of day care resources coupled with a demand for such resources appeared in Congressional hearings before the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives. A brief compilation of "Comments by Governors and Other State Officials" on the Work Incentive Program indicated that of 15 states reporting, 11 decried the lack of day care facilities as being a significant problem in the operation of the WIN program.[10]

PUBLIC OPINION DATA

To help understand public opinion toward day care, it is important to differentiate various aspects of that opinion.

The concept of day care for children is supported or opposed according to how the public feels philosophically about the idea of children being cared for by someone other than the mother or father during a substantial portion of the day, possibly outside the home. Response to this issue is often contingent on who provides the day care and under what circumstances.

Thus, public opinion on implementation of day care programs becomes an issue which needs to be analyzed. There is a wide divergency of opinion about the conditions and circumstances under which a facility should be administered. Specifically, implementation is a broad category which includes the following issues:

- Is the care to be a family care home or a day care center?
- Where will the facility be situated (at a place of work? in a community?), and how will transportation to the center be provided?
- Are the children to be grouped homogeneously according to age? Socio-economic class? Race?
- Will the program content be an enriched educational one or one that supplies only basic care? Who will determine policy and program?
- How will day care be financed -- by federal sponsorship, proprietary care, or fees based on income?
- What kind of formal training should the staff have?

These issues of concern are not assigned equal importance by the public. The issues of cost, transportation, location, and the general welfare -- physical and psychological -- of the child

seem to emerge from the literature as being very salient problems to users and prospective users of day care. Public opinion on these numerous issues is probably based upon limited first-hand experience, since only approximately 6% of all children under six are receiving care in a center type facility.[11]

In examining the public's opinion on these issues, it is not enough to look at the American public as a unitary mass. Specific subpopulations which have special relationships to day care must be considered. For example, child development professionals have been attempting to exert influence on what kinds of centers the federal government ought to support. Private operators, especially the new franchising organizations, also have clear opinions on how day care services could be delivered on a national level. These two groups appear to be well organized and have fairly clear positions. Minority groups -- blacks, Chicanos, Indians, and Puerto Ricans -- and poor people in general have a special concern about what role the federal government assumes in day care because they will likely be affected as "target populations." There has already been concern expressed that federally sponsored and federally controlled day care programs will not meet the needs of minority children.[12] These groups might also be more concerned with certain issues not particularly of concern to the general public, such as nutrition, cultural history, and development of good self-image.

Therefore, public opinion may be considered as emerging from a tripartite entity. First, there is the general public, comprising private individuals in an unorganized fashion with no particular unifying characteristic, whose primary relation to federally supported day care is as taxpayers. The second entity comprises those relatively well-organized groups, generally providers rather than recipients of day care services, representing

special viewpoints regarding day care -- child welfare professionals, private industry, and some selected representatives of the federal government. Third, there are individuals and organizations representing views of potential users of day care services, essentially minority groups. While these people might not be wholly organized, there are organizations which do speak to their special needs and concerns.

In all cases, both the views of organizational spokesmen and individuals are needed to compile an accurate account of public opinion.

OPINIONS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC

As noted previously, the general public, until recently, has been relatively silent on the subject of day care. Few systematic attempts have been made to determine how the general public feels about day care.

Concept of Day Care. Judged by past and current attitudes, as well as behavior, the public at large supports the general concept of the child being taken care of for extended periods of time by someone other than the parents. However, this has been largely informally arranged care with friends or relatives on an individual basis. The concept of day care, then, is a general notion not specifying the conditions under which the care is provided. It is also unclear whether this favorable disposition includes support for parent absenteeism from the home in other than necessary circumstances.

In June 1969, the Gallup Poll asked the following question (underlines added for this paper) of a random sample of adults in the United States:[13]

Day care centers for very young children are being set up so that mothers living in poor areas can take jobs and so that children can get early educational training.

How do you feel about this -- would you favor or oppose having the Federal government provide funds to set up centers in most communities?

It should be noted that in answering this question the individual is being asked for opinions on at least five separate issues:

1. day care will be federally supported;
2. day care will be in centers;
3. centers will be in poor communities;
4. care will be provided so that the mother can work;
5. care will be provided so that young children can get educational training.

In answers to questions of this type it is difficult to determine what portion of the question the individual respondent feels is the most important. For example, an individual may favor day care centers so that mothers can work, but may not necessarily favor the educational training of very young children.

With these limitations in mind, the survey showed that 64% of the American people would favor a program like the one defined in the question. A breakdown of the survey shows that women (68%) more than men (59%), blacks (83%) more than whites (63%), and young adults (77%) more than older persons (63%) would favor such a progaam.

In addition, persons at higher educational levels supported the program more than did less educated persons. The percentages favoring the program were high for some specific groups of persons. For example, 80% or more of white women under 30 stated that they would favor such a program. Persons in communities of 500,000 or more showed greater support (70%) for day care than

individuals in smaller communities. For example, in communities of less than 2,500 people, only 58% favored these centers.

While the above figures indicate a relatively high level of support for the kind of day care program suggested by the question, it should be remembered that some persons may favor the program as a means of helping mothers to work or reducing the welfare polls rather than supporting day care programs in general. The results of the above poll should be compared with one taken by Harris in 1967.[14] The question asked was:

> *Besides providing for the military security of the country, the Federal government conducts a number of programs in many different areas. I want to run down some of these programs. For each, tell me if you think it should be expanded, kept as is, or cut back.*

The results for the Head Start program were:

Expand	Keep As Is	Cut Back	Not Sure
23%	33%	21%	23%

In relation to other programs, the Head Start program was apparently only moderately supported by the public.

It should be kept in mind that in contrast to the question on day care centers asked by the Gallup Poll, the above question was related to a concrete federal program which the public could identify. A further difference is that the Head Start program is specifically for educational training for young children in poor communities.

It is interesting to note that on the same Harris poll, 45% of the public wanted to expand federal aid to education and 47% wanted more Federal scholarships for needy college students. Only 9 and 10% wanted to cut programs in these respective areas.

Thus, the public wanted more Federal support for education, but not for educational training for young children. On the same poll, the public opposed further expansion of welfare and relief payments.

However, results of a similar poll published in March 1970, indicated a distinct shift in opinion toward welfare spending.[15] According to this 1970 Harris survey, "In 1969 twice as many people wanted to cut welfare first as wanted to 'cut it least.' This negative response has now given way to an even split." There was no distinct response category for Head Start as in the earlier survey, so it is not clear whether the increased positive response to welfare spending would suggest a similar change for programs such as Head Start, but such a change is conceivable.

The Metro Poll, conducted by the *Minneapolis Star*, published results of a day care poll which included the following two questions:

> *It's estimated that one of every four American women with children under the age of six works. Would you favor or oppose giving working mothers income tax de-deductions to help offset the cost of day care for their children?*
>
> *Hennepin County is considering setting up neighborhood day care centers for children of working mothers. Families would be charged according to their ability to pay, and day care for poor families would be paid for by local taxes. Do you think your county should do this?*

The majority of respondents (55.7 and 58.3%) favored these proposals for tax deductions and neighborhood day care centers.[16] In general, women (61.4 and 63.9%) favored them to a greater extent than men (49.3 and 52.1%.) Age also seemed to be an important indicator of opinion. Those in the 21-29 bracket favored (76.6%) the countywide concept of neighborhood centers. Decreasing support with increasing age was found to be the trend for both proposals.

Income distribution, unencumbered by any subjective labeling of lower class, middle class, etc., also followed a particular pattern. The greatest support for both questions came from the group which earns $5,000-$7,999 per year (63.3 and 68.4%.) It was also found that this group had the largest percentage of working mothers. It may be that they were not merely responding positively to some sort of abstract social service, but were speaking from their own needs.

College-educated individuals also supported to a greater extent (59.8 and 64.5%,) in comparison with the non-college population, the concepts of tax deductions and county-supported day care centers.

In sum, the *Star* showed that most of the citizens in the five-county region, including and surrounding the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, supported the principle of establishing day care centers in the metropolitan area for working mothers and allowing costs to be tax deductible.

While the previous data have indicated the widespread support for the general concept of day care, there are many people who oppose day care on the basis that a woman's place is in the home taking care of children, whether or not of school age, on a full-time basis. It is also claimed that the children of working mothers tend to become juvenile delinquents.[17] Negative views on day care, it has been noted, tend to be interwoven with negative attitudes toward mothers who are not at home all day and with the feeling that the family, especially the mother, is solely responsible for child care. These generally unfavorable attitudes toward programs to improve or expand day care may often be considered as part of a generally conservative attitude rather than solely a function of attitudes specific to day care.[18]

In sum, according to the data available, there is widespread support for day care services in general. However, determining opinion about implementation of day care services, which includes a wide variety of issues about which the public may have had little opportunity to experience thus far, is a more complex matter.

Family versus Center Care. According to Ruderman's *Child Care and Working Mothers*, a child care center is "quite generally" seen as having intrinsic value, not merely something to be utilized as a last resort.[19] Of all the working mothers interviewed in the author's seven-community study, 47% said that they "probably would" use a day care center staffed by teachers and operated by the community. Many aspects of such an arrangement were cited as positive attributes by the women: a licensed center provides safe, quality care; trained teachers would assure competent personnel and therefore much of the mothers' anxiety and strain would be eliminated. Additionally, many responded favorably to the opportunity for the children to learn, acquire social skills, and participate in interesting activities.

The negative responses to the question pinpointed some of the reasons why people do not wish to use center-type facilities. The presumed impersonality, lack of individual attention, and ill effects of unfamiliar surroundings were cited as reasons, as well as too much structure and regimentation. Many also imagined that such centers would primarily serve poor and disadvantaged families and they did not want their children to associate with "undesirable influences."

Socioeconomic status had a positive correlation to positive responses. Fifty-two percent of respondents with "Very Low" socioeconomic status indicated that they would use such a center,

whereas only 29% of respondents with "Very High" socioeconomic status answered likewise. (Ruderman points out that this decrease may be due not only to unfavorable attitudes toward group care, but also to biases against proposed community chest sponsorship.) It is interesting to note that a positive feature which declines as socioeconomic status rises is the aspect of learning and skill acquisition: more women from lower socioeconomic classes mentioned this than respondents from high socioeconomic backgrounds. Those undesirable features which tend to rise with socioeconomic status are lack of warm, individual care, undesirable influences, and too much structure.

A breakdown based upon race revealed that a significantly higher proportion (65%) of black working women would use the day care center than would white working mothers (41%.) This is attributed to the advantages of education and social value that black mothers see the center as providing. It was also noted that the black community had a greater degree of dissatisfaction with existing child care facilities than did the white community, and this would also help to account for the differences according to race.

Another section of the Child Welfare League's Study provided some very surprising preferences on the subject of family versus center care.[20] It should be kept in mind, however, that these data were collected in the early 1960's and may be outdated. The survey questioned a sample of individuals from groups felt to be strategic in influencing policy on child issues. Included were child welfare professionals, board members of social agencies, clergymen, labor leaders, and businessmen. These individuals were asked if <u>their</u> families required regular care for a child under six, and what type of care would they prefer. The results were as follows:

The overwhelming majority of respondents, in almost all groups and strata would choose individual private arrangements.... The exceptions are professionals in Jewish agencies, where 48% would choose a day care center (mostly private) and the Preschool Stratum where 45% would choose a center (mostly public.)[21]

These results show that even among professionals in the day care field, most (54%) persons would prefer private, individual arrangements (family day care) for their children if day care were required. The results also indicate little preference for public centers when centers are chosen at all. Of preschool professionals, 34% chose public center care. The next highest group, labor leaders, selected public center day care 18% of the time. All other groups, if they chose center care at all, preferred private center care (including centers run by private agencies.) This portion of the study was summarized as follows:

There is widespread preference for <u>in-home</u> individual care. Very few respondents indicate that a day care center would be their first choice, and only a minority would choose a center even as a second choice.[22]

It is enlightening to contrast the results of this survey with those of the Gallup Poll, which indicated support for public day care facilities in poor communities. The implication is that such centers may be acceptable "for other's children," not for one's own.

Based upon the preceding sources of information, the public's attitude toward center care seems to be changing. The extensive data from the Ruderman study show that center care had been largely perceived as serving "underprivileged" populations, but apparently increasing numbers of people are currently perceiving center care as a valid alternative. It remains to be seen how the general population would respond if both public and private day care services are available.

Location. The major question is whether the day care facility should be located near the mother's place of work or in the neighborhood. Industry has taken the lead in providing facilities at or near the place of work.[23] Mothers who work at hospitals and apparel factories have praised locating the center at work for providing easy access in case of an emergency.[24] Mothers have commented on how it is comforting to know that your child is well taken care of next door or in the same building. In a study in Sacramento, California, 15% of those responding to a question about problems in obtaining satisfactory child care stated that location in relation to their homes or places of employment was a factor; 12% identified getting school-age children to school and preschoolers to a day care facility in another part of town as a hindrance.[25] Unfortunately, no further explication of the consequences of inconvenient locations was provided.

In another study, this in Aurora, Illinois, of the total number of respondents to a question about location of day care facilities, 71.9% indicated that they would prefer a facility near home.[26] In San Diego, California, distance and lack of transportation proved to be a significant problem. More than 50% of people living in the San Diego area dealt with this by using child care facilities within three blocks of their homes.[27]

In summary, it appears that when faced with the problem of location, most people seek a solution on their own and find child care facilities in the neighborhoods, but if provided with a center at their place of work, they find that satisfactory.

Grouping. The issue of how children should be grouped in a day care center has elicited little feedback from the public. The Child Welfare League, however, revealed in its survey that a chief complaint against public day care centers was the fear that there would be many disturbed children from underprivileged backgrounds in the center and that this would be an undesirable

influence.[28] There were racial overtones to this in the North and explicit anti-black sentiment in the South, acoording to the study. On the other hand, there are many parents who would like a day care center to provide their children with exposure to and experience with children from dissimilar backgrounds.[29] Thus, no clear-cut picture about opinion on grouping has, as yet, emerged.

Program. It appears that the notion of providing a good deal more than custodial care is widely supported. It has already been noted that in Ruderman's survey, educational components were seen as positive features to more low-income parents than to others. Privately run profit making centers use educational activities as a big selling point and emphasize the benefits that would accrue to the children in such centers.[30] Testimony before the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives also emphasized the importance and value of child development programs for centers.[31] While the worth of educational aspects of day care is acknowledged widely, there has been little public opinion expressed about what kind and how much emphasis should be placed on it.

Cost. Cost is a major consideration for parents. A number of surveys have determined how much parents would like to pay or how much they are able to afford comfortably. A survey in Duluth, Minnesota found that parents were willing to spend per week $14.25 for one child; $17.40 for two children, $21.40 for three; and $24.65 for four children.[32] These figures are averages of those questioned. A study in Aurora, Illinois, revealed that parents could afford from $5 to $15 a week for each child.[33] In considering cost, one must examine the reasons the mother seeks employment and what percentage of her salary is to go for child care.

Staff. Whether or not to use paraprofessionals to staff day care centers has generated a good deal of controversy. In a study of rural child care a majority of community leaders stated without reservation that they were in favor of using nonprofessionals to staff government supported day care centers (51.4%,) and in response to a question about the use of volunteers, 72.4% were in favor of it.[34] Even more support was elicited from the community indigent population: 56.9% favored use of nonprofessionals, while 90.8% supported the use of volunteers. Some of the Head Start experience, however, lends some dissenting opinion to this approval of using community personnel. It has been reported that some mothers doubt the value of centers with indigent staff, typically expressed as "What does she (the teacher) know about teaching children that I don't know?"[35]

OPINIONS OF SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

The opinions of special interest groups are generally voiced in a more cohesive manner than the opinion of the general population. While all these groups are strong supporters of day care programs, their attitudes toward specific aspects of day care vary as a consequence of their reasons for advocating day care.

Child development professionals generally represent those who look upon day care as oriented toward a comprehensive program providing all services relating to child development, such as health, education, social, and so forth. Educators emphasize early education training, mostly in cognitive and reading skills. Child welfare professionals see day care as a responsibility for the entire welfare of the child and include family counseling, health services, foster care, and adoptive services. Persons responsible for public assistance view day care as a supportive service for working mothers, especially as a means of reducing welfare caseloads and costs.

Minority groups generally see day care as a means of freeing individuals for employment, and if not guarded against, will be a vehicle, like the public school system, which transmits the cultural patterns of middle-class society.

Industry focuses on day care from two angles: first, as an employee benefit-type program with profit-making aspects (due to reduced turnover and absenteeism;) and second, as a profit-making industry in itself.

Women's Liberation groups visualize day care programs as a means to free women from sole or major responsibility for child care as well as to reinforce the right to human development and self-determination for both women and children.

Concept of Day Care. All of these groups and/or individuals vigorously support day care in one form or another. They are alike in that they feel that there is a great unmet need for such facilities. To our knowledge, there is, as yet, no formal organization that strictly opposes day care for children.

Implementation and its concommitant issues are the factors which result in discordant attitudes and different emphases.

Family versus Center Care. Most of the publicly stated views have been about center type care. Family care, based upon research information, has received mixed evaluations. While these special groups would support upgraded and carefully licensed family care, they see center care as the vehicle for achieving their objectives. However, in the Chicago area, the Illinois Bell Telephone Company found child care to be a significant need of its employees.[36] Acknowledging that these needs were spread throughout the metropolitan area, making it inconvenient

and uneconomical to set up one center, Illinois Bell assists its employees in finding child care services, either center or family care. Many of their placements have been in family care homes. According to the company, the employees are pleased with the arrangements they have made and the high standards of the care. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, in conjunction with manufacturers, has set up center facilities near plants in Maryland and Virginia.[37] Again, the employees seem well satisfied with the quality of care and the physical environment. Most activity and opinion has been directed toward the establishment and improvement of day care center facilities, even though most day care is presently family care.

Location. As far as could be determined there has not been much discussion or opinion concerning the location of centers from these special consideration groups. There have been, however, arguments forwarded by child welfare specialists that day care is best implemented in the neighborhood.[38] The two main reasons given to support their stand are ease of transportation -- getting the child to and from the center -- and familiarity for the child -- the neighborhood should be a more comfortable environment than alternative locations.

The phenomenon of industries locating centers at or nearby the employees' place of work has come under attack from radical groups and from the Women's Liberation movement.[39] The reason is that most of the companies that have set up centers are textile manufacturers in the South who pay lower wages than plants in the North and are fighting workers' attempts to unionize. Provision of convenient day care facilities is seen as a move to thwart struggles for higher wages and/or unionization, in that a woman worker may think twice before endangering her job by becoming involved with the union or leaving for slightly higher wages elsewhere.

Grouping. Grouping of children, per se, has not been a major issue, but there has been concern expressed regarding consequences of federal funding for day care centers serving only poor people. This, it is thought, will further separate poor Americans from wealthier ones. This limited funding might also cause resentment on the part of working people who need such services, can't afford private care, and are not served by the government. Edward Zigler, chief of the Office of Child Development, believes that providing desirable services, such as day care, only to poor children will create a backlash among those middle-class parents who want the same services for their children.[40]

Program. Much attention has been directed toward the issue of program content, with all groups publicly supporting the concept of enriched, developmental, educational programs for the children -- ones that provide more than basic care and supervision.

Minority groups such as blacks and Chicanos, however, have expressed specific dissatisfaction and dismay about what may happen with federally funded or private day care centers. According to Gil Lopez of Mexican-American Systems (MAS,) a nationwide Chicano organization primarily concerned with early child development, present curricula are irrelevant, and insensitive to the child's background, thereby retarding the Chicano children by making them ashamed of their heritage.[41] MAS proposes, as an alternative, a day care curriculum providing for the special health and nutritional needs of migrant children, and bilingual and bicultural learning experiences that will maintain cultural values while incorporating them into American culture, reinforcing both.

The Black Child Development Education Center also cautions against private day care operations which would ignore the

economic needs of the black community and might use material irrelevant to thet community.[42] A representative of Black Urban Systems, a Berkeley consulting firm, argues that black communities should determine what programs are relevant to them.

Women's Liberation spokeswomen have also voiced some clear concern about program content at centers.[43] They argue that day care centers should break down burdensome sex-role stereotyping and expose children to a variety of life styles. Again, control of the day care facility is mentioned -- those who participate in the operations of the facility should have the power to determine its direction and program.

Cost. Some groups, such as Women's Liberation organizations, have advocated free day care for all children, while other groups have looked toward a sliding fee schedule.

The estimate by the federal government in the Family Assistance Plan for day care costs of $1,600 per child has been decried as far too little for adequate care by many individuals, some of whom have testified at Congressional hearings.[44] They have placed the cost in a range of more than $2,000 but individuals involved in private care claim that they can deliver quality care for less to middle-class parents because there is no need for health and nutritional components.

Staff. All groups want well-qualified individuals, sensitive to the needs of small children, to staff a day care facility. For many, this means college training in the field of early childhood education; others recognize that this is not necessarily sufficient and that in minority communities it is imperative to employ individuals from that community. Various federal programs and the Family Day Care Career Program in New York City have

sought to train and employ women on welfare.[45] These programs view day care programs as employment opportunities for many women not presently working. The Women's Liberation movement points to the importance of having men staff the facilities along with women.[46] This is seen as a means of eradicating a traditional view that child-rearing is the function solely of women and that men are to be excluded from this responsibility.

IMPACT OF DAY CARE PROGRAMS ON PUBLIC OPINION

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

What is the impact on public opinion of the growth of day care as a public issue and the increase in the number of facilities? The working hypothesis is that increased demand for and favorable opinion about day care is associated positively with increased visibility of day care. Visibility may be measured by the number of day care facilities and by coverage of the topics in the mass media. Of course, expanded federal day care is an important aspect of visibility and will have a significant impact on public opinion. Opinion may be measured through polls, surveys, and responses to mass media. Demand may be considered public opinion transformed into positive action. Waiting lists and enrollments may be examined as indices. Information on changing population variables such as age, level of education, and number of children eligible for day care should also be considered.

The ideal research design would be a before-after scheme whereby opinion and demand are measured at a certain level of visibility of day care as a public issue. Following an increase in visibility, measures of opinion and demand would again be taken. Were this sort of information available, prognostication about day care opinion and activity would be made with some reasonable legitimacy.

In attempting to secure data for these measures, various means were used; but at this time, with little success.

Information on responses to mass media coverage was solicited from various magazines and newspapers. Figures on when articles appeared in print over the past 5 years, the number of pro, con,

and neutral responses from the readership, and variables like sex and region of country, if possible, were requested. While acknowledging that those who write such letters are not necessarily a representative sample of the general population, it was felt that such information, especially if over a period of some years, would be useful.

Another source tapped was agencies of the federal government involved, at least to some degree, with day care, especially funding of it. It seemed that the number of requests for either money or technical assistance and the kind of facilities desired would provide another worthwhile indication of day care attitudes and behavior from a portion of the population.

RESULTS

As noted earlier, the number of articles on day care, as reported by the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* has more than doubled in 1970 when compared to any of the 5 previous years. It was also found that the increase in capacity of day care facilities, between 1968 and 1969 was greater (20%) than from 1967 to 1968 (12.6%.)[47]

Monies spent by state and local public welfare agencies increased by 41.5% from 1968 to 1969, while the increase from 1967 to 1968 was 2.6%, and for 1966 to 1967, 18.1%.[48] This information, as well as the information on day care for hospital employees, lends credence to the notion that day care is an increasingly visible public issue. The problem has been in gathering data on public opinion in response to this increased visibility. Some positive indication that increased visibility leads to increased demand has been offered by information from the San Francisco office of the Office of Child Development.[49] It is the impression

there that while the average number of inquiries per day is one and a half, this is increasing as more people learn about the office and its capabilities. Increased knowledge about the office and the possibility of some sort of federal aid results in more inquiries which, lately, have been mainly for center care, and most inquiries are requests for funds.

With more information of this kind disseminated on a national level, a clearer view of the impact of federal involvement in day care might emerge.

PROBLEMS FOR FUTURE STUDY

In order to increase our ability to prognosticate about public opinion on day care, the relationship between attitude and behavior should be considered. Social psychologists have largely agreed that behavior influences attitudes more than attitudes influence behavior.[50] If expressed attitudes are not consonant with present or past behavior, then attitude changes in order to be consonant with behavior. However, attitudes are only one variable among many which influence behavior. In the context of day care, while a parent may have certain attitudes about general and specific issues of day care, his behavior will be determined by what he knows to be available and by how he evaluates the things he deems important in selecting a day care facility -- cost, convenience, location, etc. Therefore, it seems that in order to speak of the future behavior of an individual or group, one should know the alternatives available, the extent of day care knowledge, and the attitudes toward various aspects of day care.

While this is a somewhat rough formulation, it is expected that future work will include further clarification and sophistication

of this approach coupled with the ongoing task of gathering data on the impact of increased visibility of day care.

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